

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Margaret Irene Strickland, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the past year and a half, senior Democratic leaders decided the upheaval and hardship of a once-in-a-century pandemic was actually a chance to justify radical leftwing change.

This isn't just me conjecturing; it is what they keep saying. Right at the start of the crisis, March 2020, the House Democratic Whip said the pandemic offered "a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision."

Just last week, President Biden said: "This pandemic has been God-awful for so many reasons. . . . But"—"but," he said—"it does present us with an opportunity." So they get points for honesty, at least. The reckless taxing-and-spending spree the Democrats are writing behind closed doors is designed to leave Americans with a socialist country they never voted for and a country that working families, in many ways, would barely recognize.

Last night, one of those many efforts hit a stumbling block. Senate Democrats were reminded the rules of this institution will not permit them to shove a massive amnesty for illegal immigrants into a reckless taxing-and-spending spree they want to ram through on a party-line basis.

Our Democratic colleagues cannot pretend that massive transformational policy changes are mere budgetary tweaks. As no less an authority than our colleague now-Chairman BERNIE SANDERS said just a few years ago, "the function of reconciliation is to adjust federal spending and revenue, not"—not—"to enact major changes in social policy." That is Chairman SANDERS a few years ago. That is a lesson he and his caucus need to relearn.

Even with the border as insecure as it has ever been, the far left wanted sweeping amnesty, and Democratic leaders dutifully tried their very best. It just goes to show you how radical this legislation is going to be.

Democrats want to tamper with Americans' Medicare and stretch the program even thinner, while it already faces fiscal challenges. They want to interfere massively with the States that choose not to bow to Obamacare mandates on Medicaid; they want to use healthcare dollars to line the pock-

ets of special interests with big union giveaways; and they want to impose socialist price controls on Americans' medicines that would leave us with fewer new treatments and new cures in the future.

It adds up to a massive leap toward socialized medicine. But somehow this still only scratches the surface.

Democrats are also trying to force through an unprecedented Federal takeover of American families' childcare options that may leave faith-based childcare providers high and dry. They want an all-out assault on affordable, reliable, homegrown American energy so the entire country could be marched toward California utility prices, California gas prices, and California electricity blackouts—just what families want.

Look, I could go on all day. The reckless taxing-and-spending spree that Democrats are writing behind closed doors is shaping up to be exactly what they promised: an effort to exploit this terrible but temporary pandemic as a Trojan horse for permanent socialism.

Now, on a related matter, Democrats have united, unified control of the Senate, the House, and the White House. Their strategy for all this transformational borrowing, spending, and tax hikes was deliberately designed to include no Republican input and to receive no Republican votes.

Since Democrats decided to go it alone, they will not get Senate Republicans' help with raising the debt limit. I have explained this clearly and consistently for over 2 months. We do not have divided government. Democrats do not need our help. They have every tool to address the debt limit on their own—the same party-line process they used to ram through inflationary spending in March and already plan to use once again this fall.

Now, look, this might inconvenience Democrats. It might delay their next reckless taxing-and-spending spree, but Democrats cannot risk the full faith and credit of our Nation to serve their own partisan timelines. Democrats decided to govern alone. Their unified Democratic government must put basic governing duties ahead of partisan wish lists. If they don't, the consequences for our country would be catastrophic.

Senate Republicans would support a clean continuing resolution that includes appropriate disaster relief and targeted Afghan assistance. We will not support legislation that raises the debt limit.

Remember, when the debt suspension lapsed in August, the debt limit was automatically ratcheted up to account for all of the borrowing that had occurred up to that date. This isn't about the past. It is about the future. And Democrats want to build a partisan future without our input. So Democrats will not get bipartisan facilitators for their purely partisan spending binge.

Democrats are fully capable of owning this step themselves. The Demo-

cratic chairman of the House Budget Committee admitted just yesterday: "We can do it through reconciliation. [But] [l]eadership has said they don't want to do that."

One party controls the entire government. They have the power to address this alone. And as I have warned since July, that is what they will need to do.

TRIBUTE TO HAL ROGERS

Madam President, now, on one final matter, Representative HAL ROGERS once described Southeastern Kentuckians by saying: "They're honest, forthright. . . . they can see through a phony in a minute flat." So it is fitting his constituents just reelected him by 70 points. He is certainly honest, forthright, and no phony.

For over 40 years, HAL has fought for his home region and delivered unparalleled support for its development and its growth. In honor of HAL becoming the longest serving Representative in the history of the Commonwealth earlier this September, I would like to pay tribute to this one-of-a-kind Kentuckian.

I first met HAL during the 1971 Kentucky gubernatorial election. He was already a rising star in the State Republican Party, having just been elected Commonwealth's attorney for Pulaski and Rockcastle Counties 2 years prior. As a fellow attorney and young conservative, I looked up to HAL and watched his career with considerable interest.

Less than a decade later, HAL was elected to the House of Representatives in Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District the same year Ronald Reagan was elected President. Since then, he has won reelection 19 times, always by a wide margin. He loves his corner of the State, and as his repeated victories absolutely prove, his constituents love him right back.

Once HAL got to Congress, he quickly went to work fighting for the issues his constituents cared the most about. His hard-won legislative victories earned him praise from fellow House Republicans who tapped him to lead the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Eight years later, he became chairman of the full House Appropriations Committee, expertly cutting spending, reducing waste, and directing funds to important projects all across the country. As a former Commonwealth's attorney, HAL used his law enforcement credentials to defend Kentucky from a wide array of threats. Before the rest of America was paying full attention to the scourge of substance abuse, HAL launched Operation UNITE.

The anti-narcotics initiative covers 32 Kentucky counties and has been on the frontlines in the fight against the opioid epidemic, helping to lock up thousands of criminals and remove millions of dollars' worth of illegal drugs from the streets.

HAL is a lead promoter of investment in Southeastern Kentucky, which for